

The Politics of Water  
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The management of water, one of the most valuable and vital natural resources on the planet, is an involvement with politics, productivity, and personal interest. Issues of water usage include, but are not limited to, water quality, water allocation, economic development, and water conservation. Currently in the United States, 355,000 million gallons of water are used daily, with 12% of that water being used for public use, 33-36% being used for irrigation, and 40-45% being used in thermoelectric power plants.

As our world continues to grow and more energy and food are necessary, the need for thermoelectric power and irrigation has increased, resulting in an increased need for water. An astounding 90% of water used in thermo power plants is solely for cooling. Similarly, agriculture is a heavily water-intensive but important component of Georgia's economy, contributing 12% of the state's annual economic output. Strategies are in place to increase water efficiency in both of these processes.

The state of Georgia faces its own water issues concerning water allocation and upstream/downstream usage. Since 1990, the tri-state water war between Georgia, Florida, and Alabama has been an example of the politics of water, exemplifying the factor of personal interest in water management systems. Each state is concerned about the allocation of water provided to them from the Chattahoochee, Flint, Coosa, and Tallapoosa rivers, all of which originate in Georgia. According to the Southern Environmental Law Center, Georgia believes its need of

adequate water is due to its steadily increasing population, Florida wants to ensure it has enough water to continue to run its multi-million dollar shellfish industry, and Alabama is concerned about Georgia not leaving enough freshwater for their power generation and fisheries. Most recently, the state of Georgia has submitted a 33-page response to Florida's complaints.